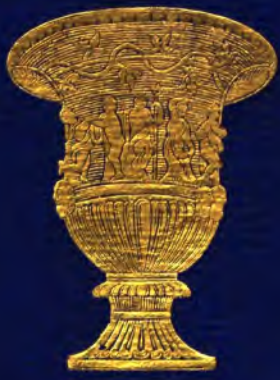

THE

PLAGUES OF EGYPT,

A POEM,

AND

OTHER PIECES.

BY

FREDERICK JOHN STÜRMER.

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION TO THE REV. JOHN FELL, M. A.,
HEAD-MASTER OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
HUNTINGDON, AND INCUMBENT OF WILBURTON,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

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MDCCCLI.

TO

THE REVEREND JOHN FELL, M. A.,

HEAD MASTER OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, HUNTINGDON,

AND

INCUMBENT OF WILBURTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE,

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

HIS LATE PUPIL, AND VERY SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

—o—

In putting forth this little volume of Poems to the public, the Author hopes that his youth may in some measure claim an indulgence from his readers—nor does he doubt that it will do so, if he may be allowed to judge from the kindness and encouragement which he has already experienced.

He would not have ventured to affix his name to this, his maiden production, but that the mode of publishing which he has adopted, precludes all possibility of concealment.

Heapham Rectory,
Gainsborough,
Feb. 21, 1851.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT,

A POEM.

ERRATA.

Page 30—line 10—for *with*, read *within*.
Page 54—line 18—for *stal'd*, read *stol'd*
Page 94—line 3—for *But to that lone heart no sound*, read *But still to that lone heart no sound*.

The Plagues of Egypt.

A POEM.

—o—

When Israel's tribes, by sore affliction rent,
'Neath the tall spears of conquering Egypt bent—
And the proud tyrant drew with tighter hand
The galling chain—from Goshen's bleeding land
The swollen tide, long pent, in one deep prayer—
One heart-wrung cry for freedom rent the air:
Affrighted echo left the startled plain,
Uprose to Heaven—nor rose to Heaven in vain.
'Tis silence all! on Misraim's jewell'd throne
Sits the proud monarch of the world—each stone
That glows and sparkles there—each costly gem—
Once blazed within a prince's diadem.

Far as the eye can see, a glittering throng
Of troops and nobles crowd the space along;
Whose vari-colored robes and turbans seem
In the bright spears' and polished axes' gleam,
Like a vast bed of roses sway'd beneath
The gentle murmurs of a zephyr's breath.
'Tis silence all! and not a sound is heard
To break the solemn stillness with a word—
But every eye, and every glance intent
To catch the monarch's passing thought is bent,
As now from red to white, from white to red,
Like the faint gleams from some volcano shed
Athwart the heavens, changed that saddened brow,
Now flush'd with anger, pale with terror now.
But when his glances swift and frequent ran
O'er the bow'd tribes that thronged the rich Divan,
And view'd, with pride elate, from his high seat
Princes and nations prostrate at his feet—
Words of deep scorn, "Let the base slaves appear,"
Ring through the court and startle every ear!

And who are they—alone, who, 'midst the band
Of cringing slaves, erect and stately stand?
Whose curling lips—whose eyes flash back again
Scorn for contempt—contumely for disdain!—
So undismay'd, so dauntless, that they seem
Like spirit-heroes,* such as poets dream
Peopled the world, ere Men's† rebellious spear
All conquering drove them from their dwellings here:
And yet the elder of the two, whose age
And thin white locks bespeak the thoughtful sage,
More timid clings to the tall chief, as though
From his bright flashing eye and dazzling brow,
His own might catch the spiritual glance, and share
The glow of inspiration burning there—
As fireless planets borrow from the sun
Their light—and shine from being shone upon!
Not so his brother, whose dark piercing eye—

* Men or Menes, the first King of Egypt.—See Appendix.

† For an account of the exploits of the Gigantic race, or Demigods, who dwelt in Egypt, previous to the time of Menes—see Euseb: Chronic: Canonum:

Like a caged eagle's—gazing endlessly—
Still speaks the warrior, and his form though bow'd
And bent with age, still towers above the crowd.
"Are these," cried Pharaoh, "these the foes that bring
"Rebellion to the footstool of their king?
"Slave of a rebel race!—think'st thou the rage
"Of second childhood—impotent old age—
"Can turn one atom from its course the will
"Of him, who rules thee—aye—*will* rule thee still!
"Would'st learn my power, look, and thou may'st see
"Even the fierce Arab bends the unwilling knee—
"Chiefs of the Dankali race their tribute bring,
"Far from their Demon mountains wandering—
"The black and sinewy tribes that dwell beneath
"The hot and burning sun of Anygath—
"The swarthy Nubians—and the tribes that dwell
"By the blue Nile, live but that power to swell!
"Then vain thy hopes! as soon the whirlwind's blast
"O'er the wide plains those mighty towers* shall cast,

* The Pyramids supposed by many authors and for many excellent reasons to be the work of the Israelites.

"As thou with all thy threats—shall ring from me
"One moment's respite from thy slavery!"—
Scarce had he ceased, when from the motley crowd
Of tribes and nations that before him bowed,
Restless and chafing as a troubled sea,
Bursts the wild shout of hate and mockery!
Hate—for the Hebrew dogs whose chiefs could dare
To beard the monarch in their presence there—
Scorn—for the foe, whose age bespeaks too plain
The iron frame laps'd to its clay again—
And many a flashing steel, and many a sword
But waits—impatient waits, but for a word
From the royal lips, as madly on they pressed,
To find its scabbard in the Hebrew's breast!
But no! a spell of more than human force
Fell on the crowd, and stay'd them in their course!
The uplifted sword descended not—the shout
Died ere the lips could ring its mockery out!
And hush'd—aw'd—tam'd—by the wild glances flung
From the chief's flashing eye—a tremor clung

Round every heart, as when the lightning's glare
Dazzles—yet leaves an icy chillness there!
And then his voice! what mortal lips before
Such mighty power, such thrilling accents bore!
"I come not here, Amenophis, to crave
"Peace and forgiveness as a suppliant slave;
"But, in the name of him I serve, demand
"At once a people's freedom from thy hand!
"Are we thy subjects! we thy slaves! by war?
"Or the fix'd precepts of our ancient law?
"No! By the lust of treacherous Tothmes'* pride
"Fell Jewry's power—Israel's freedom died!
"Are these thy troops! What are they! See them now
"Bow'd down with terror, fear on every brow!
"One breath of *His* shall hurl this trembling throng,
"Swift as the whirlwind hurls the sands along—
"One glance of *His*—too heavenly far for one

* Exodus c. I., v. VIII. "Now there arose up a new King over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." This King appears to have been Tuthmosis or Tothmes the I. who was the head of the eighteenth Dynasty, of which Amenophis was the last.

"Of mortal frame or mould to gaze upon—
"Sudden, and swift as when the lightning's dart
"In one short moment rends the rock apart—
"Shall hurl thee headlong from thy kingly state,
"Stript of thy power—alone—and desolate!"

And when the last words died away, and left
Each where he stood—all motionless—bereft
Of every sense save fear—Where Misraim, where,
Thy fabled might—thy boasted pow'r—declare!
Where now thy pride—the swiftly rolling car—
The glittering squadron—and the pomp of war?
Gone! fled! Thy people silent as the grave,
Behold the slave, a king—the king, a slave!

Slowly and faintly breaks the first soft ray
Of tremulous light that ushers in the day,
And now the sun, all glorious, the same
As bright and glowing from his God he came,
Bids nature wake—and greets with many a smile
The calm blue waters of the laughing Nile.

No headlong torrents from the snow capp'd brow
Of Abyssinia flood its waters now,
The holy drop, the bright miraculous tear,
Of pitying *Isis sheds its glories here—
So pure, so holy, that its votaries say
Even as it falls, corruption dies away,
And the foul Nile—chafing with fretful din,
And turbid stream—turns, as it drinks it in,
Suddenly clear and crystal as the waves
That glance and sparkle in the holy caves,
Where the bless'd spirits of the good, who die,
Quaff the pure draught of immortality.

Father of Streams!—whose dark waves roll along
Urged by sad fate, and Typho's† siren song,

* The ancient Egyptians (see Plut: de Is: et Osir:) believed that the yearly inundation of the Nile was caused by the tears shed by Isis for the loss of Osiris, whom Typho had basely murdered—the first tear which fell was believed to possess the peculiar virtue mentioned, and some authors, Jablonski for instance, suppose that in this belief originated the present superstition of the "Nucta."

† Typho was the Evil Spirit of the Egyptians. They hated the sea and called it Typho, because it swallowed up the waters of their beloved Nile.

From the white mountains of the moon,* to where
Arabia's spices scent the distant air !†
Well mays't thou smile—as the light wanton breeze
Ruffles thy wave—to kiss such shores as these—
What scene so fair, through all thy varied way
As this that greets thee on thy festal day !
Tall stately cedars, round whose branches twine
The frail young tendrils of the clustering vine—
Light waving palms, whose feathery tops the dew
Bespangles o'er with gems of every hue,
Glistening like emeralds from the Gebel‡ mine !
What dews,§ oh Misraim, half so bright as thine ?
And see ! the sun, uprisen from yonder bed
Of blushing roses lifts his glowing head,
And as his beams—bright wandering heralds—rove
Through the light foliage of the orange grove,
A thousand thrilling voices wake the air

* Gebel-el-Kumr, or Mountains of the Moon.
† Vide Milton Paradise Lost, IV. 152.
‡ Gebel Zumrud (the Mount of Emeralds).
§ The Dews of Egypt, as if to supply the deficiency of rain, are very abundant.

With tuneful choir, Nature's matin prayer!
A thousand buds of every shape unfold
Their tender blossoms to his eye of gold,
Fair as the flowers that bloom in Irem's bright
Delicious gardens, hidden from the sight
Mid boundless wastes—where blissful genii rove,
And all the air is redolent of love!*

Lo! Memphis pours from all her brazen gates
Nations and princes—kings and potentates!
And now the groves, the lawns, the gardens stir
With human life—warriors from sultry Fur—
Add's swarthy sons—the hardy mountaineer
From Efat's heights—and many a horn-tipp'd spear
And ivory-hilted sword, and tawny shield,
From Kordofan's† and Sennaar's level field—

* Sheddad, of the tribe of Add, founded the city and gardens of Irem—fancied to be miraculously hidden from view in impassable deserts.

Abulfaraj. Hist: Dynast:

† Sennaar, a country in the north east of Africa, on the Nile at the junction; its produce was honey and ivory. Rhinoceroses abounded, of whose skin the natives made shields. Vide Buckhardt.

Such, such thy worshippers, proud Nile! yet they
Are but the slaves of him whom all obey,
What all the servile reverence they bring,
Compared with his, their conqueror—their king!
Yes! ev'n Misraim's proud Lord, when he
Beholds thy ark, Osiris, bends the knee,
Dcject and humbled as the gorgeous train
Of priests sweep by with slow and solemn strain,
Sweet as the sounds from Menmon's harp* that rise
To chaunt with solemn dirge Nights' funeral obsequies.

Who hung the pendent spheres? Whose mighty hand
Spread the wide waters o'er the new-born land?
Oh, fallen man! oh, base degenerate soul!
That feels—sees—fears—yet heeds not Heaven's control!
Who sees the stream replete with blessings flow—

* Many classical authors bear testimony to the truth of this wonderful Phenomenon, hence Juvenal says,

"Dimidio magicæ resonant ubi Memnone chordæ,
Atque vetus Thebe centum jacet obruta portis;"

and Tacitus in his An: II and 61, has "Memnonis Saxea effigies, ubi radiis solis icta est, vocalem sonum reddens."—For the probable cause see Appendix.

Sees the bright sun, and feels his cheering glow—
Nor recognises there the power divine
That feeds the stream, and bids the planet shine!
Such now is Pharaoh, as with haughty mien,
And princely look he gazes o'er the plain;
What recks he now of Heaven's smile or frown,
The jewell'd wreath is in his hand to crown
The sacred River, as its trembling bride,
Glowing with blushes, sinks into its tide!*
Gods! how the diamonds glow! almost as bright
As woman's eyes—or the last star of night!
"She comes! she comes! the excited crowds exclaim,
"The Nile's fair bride exulting in the name"—
She comes! she comes! tho' scarce a breath to fill
The silken sail that idly flaps at will—
Still the light vessel bounds along the tide,
Almost to where stands Pharaoh in his pride.

* "A custom, still subsisting at this day, seems to me to prove that the Egyptians, formerly sacrificed a young virgin to the God of the Nile; for they now make a statue of earth in the shape of a girl, to which they give the name of the Betrothed Bride, and throw it into the river."—Savary.

What checks it now? why pales the diamond's glow?
Why! Pharaoh, why!—that sad and troubled brow?
'Tis they—the Hebrew chiefs!—yes! once again
They ask for freedom—and they ask in vain—
Round Moussa's head a dazzling glory shone,
Pure as the flame that wraps Jehovah's throne;
One look upturn'd in commune with his God,
And o'er the Nile he waves his magic rod!
A piercing shriek, in fear and horror nurs'd,
Broke from that maiden's lips, as wild she burst
From the priest's grasp—and springs within the flood
And sinks—oh God! sinks in a sea of blood!
Fear in each glance—in every face dismay—
They fly—they fly—the bursting banks give way!
They fly—they fly—yet still the slimy tide
Of blood o'ertakes, and whelms them in their pride—
Of blood—warm curdling blood—whose waves give out
Foul noisome smells that taint the air about!
Vapours less foul are those the Dead Sea gives,
Round whose salt loathsome shores no creature lives—

Vapours less deadly even are those that rise
To strike the unwitting bird, that o'er it flies,
And fluttering sinks upon its wave and dies!

Breathless with haste, his cheek all blanched with fear,
From Memphis' gate, behold a priest is here!
"The limpid draught the royal maidens bore
"In glowing vases* from the Nile's sweet shore—
"Yes—the royal offering as it sparkling stood
"On the high shrine of Isis turn'd to blood!
"And hissing burst the brittle cup, and fell
"In scalding drops of blood that sethe and swell
"To boiling streams—and through the temple pour
"Like molten lead consuming all before!
"All perish'd! all! to tell the tale but I—
"The rest all lost—lost to eternity!"

* "Another important branch of the domestic arts was Pottery, in which the Egyptians displayed skill not inferior to that of the Greeks: Coptos was the chief seat of this branch of industry. The vases depicted on the monuments of Egypt are often adorned with brilliant colours." Reynier—Egypt.

Ere the last echo on his lips had died,
Breathless he sank beneath the gory tide.

Oh hapless land! even thy bright sunny skies
Catch the red tint from the foul mists that rise!
Oh hapless land! thy once refreshing dew
Taints the pure lotus with its bloodlike hue!
Oh hapless land! The very tears that flood
Thy people's cheeks, turn, as they fall, to blood!*
And now from parching throats—lips hot and dry
Breaks the wild shriek—the agonizing cry
For water—even for a single drop
The burning thirst—the raging heat to stop!
Oh! for one drop, from Siwah's† sainted well
When the hot sun awakes its mystic spell!

Seven‡ days the sun, wrapp'd in a bloody shroud

* And there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.—Exod. c. vii. v. 21.

† At Siwah was a well of the sun, whose waters were said to possess the property of being warm in the morning and evening, and cold at noon.
Herodotus IV., 181. Diod. XVII., 50., and Luer: VI., 849.

‡ Exodus c. VII, v. 25.

Half hidden rose behind the reeking cloud
Of fœtid exhalations, that obscure
Those happy skies beyond—ah! once, how pure!
Were those his rays so luridly that fell
On all around—ghastly—and horrible?
Like those from charnel lights, whose sickly glare
In the cold tomb reveal the terrors there,
Till Darkness' self with all its hidden fears
To sights like these less terrible appears!
Then welcome, night! once more in pity throw
Thy shadowy veil on all the world below!
And hide once more beneath thy sable pall
The throes—the pangs—that prey alike on all!

Who has not felt the wild ecstatic glow
Beat in each pulse, through every artery flow,
When, sickness fled, the exhilerating flame
Of health once more lights up the sinking frame!
How chang'd the aspect of each scene!—the sun
How bright! how fair each flower he shines upon!
But who shall tell—what feeble words express

The fierce delirium—the wild excess
Of rapturous joy—when Misraim's tribes behold
The sun burst forth a blazing orb of gold ?
Once more behold their lov'd—their ancient stream
In the pure rays like molten silver gleam ?
Ask the fond wretch, whose last breath pass'd away
In one faint shout to hail the approach of day !
Ask him who seven days since—how proud ! how strong !—
Now with scarce strength to drag his limbs along,
Feeble and wasted, seeks the river's side,
And plunging headlong in the rolling tide,
Dies happy then, that the lov'd stream once more
Runs pure and clearly as it ran before !
And spends, with savage joy, his latest breath
To bless the wave, that hurls him on to death !

Twice Pharaoh, twice ! the dread, the awful hand
Of Israel's God hath fallen upon thy land !
And now behold in this ill fated hour,
Thy might all sunk to nothingness—the flower

Of Egypt's chivalry—a glittering host—
Whose spears have conquered from the southern coast
Of the Great Sea*, to where the Ganges pours
His lotus-bearing wave thro' India's shores—
Wasted and shrunk like blossoms which the blast
From the hot south has wither'd as it past!
And see'st thou not in this the chastening rod—
The glowing finger of the Hebrew's God?
When half hush'd whispers, ill surpress'd with fear,
Fell indistinctly on thy startled ear:
From quivering lips, that falter'd, as they said,
"In Israel's tents the noisome pest was stay'd,
"From Goshen's plains uprose no wailing cry;
"There all was peace—there all was purity!"

But, hark! what sounds are these—loud—louder still—
Like thunder echoing from hill to hill,
Onward they roll—loud as the deafening roar
Where through Syene's† rocks the rapids pour!

* The ancient name of the Mediterranean.
† Syene, a town of Thebais on the extremities of Egypt: here are the terraces

And hark! above the shouts of men, the sound
Of the shrill clarion wakes the air around—
And as the living wave rolls on more near
The crashing cymbal, and the sistrum's clear
And ringing notes are heard, while twinkling feet
In the gay dance, responsive measure beat
To the light music of the castanet!
A troop of graceful forms as fair as they,
Earth's lovliest maids, whose beauty lured away
Those sons of God, who left their Heaven above
For earthly bliss, the Heaven of woman's love;
A graceful troop—in love's own fetters bound,
Wreaths of bright flowers that scent the air around—
Come with light step, and soft voluptuous dance,
Now coy retire, and now more bold advance.
In spotless white they come—round the fair waist
Of each a snow-white bandalet is laced,
Studded with golden stars,* that sparkling shone

of reddish granite, which, shaped into peaks, cross the bed of the Nile, and over them the river rolls majestically its impetuous and foaming waves.

* See description of nymphs in the Panathenæa, and of the πέπλος of Minerva.

All circling round a Heaven of their own;
On each maid's brow an ivy wreath, between
Whose sacred leaves those azure flowers are seen,
That o'er the Nile in rich profusion glow,
To deck the tomb of him* who sleeps below.

Next came in robes whose bright and dazzling hue
Might shame the rainbow's tints†—the chosen few
Of Misraim's priests—the few to whom alone
As all believe, those mysteries are known,
That Hermes keeps in Hebron's valley hid,‡
And those that lie beneath the pyramid
On blazing emerald written, and contain
That mystic art the vulgar seek in vain§.
And well they know them all! since Time began,
What chain so strong! What mightier talisman!
Than the few words in one short precept told,

* Osiris.

† "Priests have long vestments, sometimes white, and again glittering with all the colours of the east." Heeren 2, 2.

‡ Vide "Fables Egyptiennes."

§ The power of making gold at will.—Vide Pernetz's "Fables Egyptiennes."

"Love for the young—and mummery for the old!"
Else, why these maidens, but to fan the fire
In youth's warm veins, and wake each fond desire?
Else, why the blazing ark, that now they raise
High o'er the crowd one glowing, glittering blaze
Of burnish'd gold? hark! from each fever'd lip,
The enthusiastic shout—"the ship!*—the ship!"
Bow, dotards, bow;—believe each lie, and learn
'Tis Ammo's self—and not the gems that burn!

Aye, well they know what chord to strike—full well
They know the magic power of that spell,
On minds so moulded, that the thoughts which pass
Take but one hue from Faith's fanatic glass!
"Shout, Misraim, shout," they cry, "the pest is fled—
"Shout Misraim! for thy Gods have triumphed!
"Shout Misraim, shout! that secret, holiest rite
"In Isis' halls we celebrate to night,

* "The Ship in the great temples seems to have been very magnificent; Sesostris presented one to the temple of Ammo at Thebes, made of cedar, the inside of cedar, the outside of gold."—Diod. S. 1. 57.

"When all shall view—when every eye shall see
"The dazzling splendour of her Deity!"

Fair Mercy wept—as to the monarch's soul
With subtle power these promised wonders stole;
Fair Mercy wept—her last faint softening ray
Fades from his heart, and like those gleams that stray
Through some dark cave—their sickly radience o'er—
But leave it blacker, darker than before!

Already had the sun half sunk to rest
With the glowing chambers of the west,
Flinging his parting rays where towering high
—Land marks for Time to count his ages by—
The lofty Pyramids, more white than snow,*
Stretch their long shadows o'er the plains below;
And takes his last fond look, his last farewell,
Amid the soft melodious notes that swell

* "By reflecting the sun's rays they appeared white as snow."—Clark.

From where Serapis rears his lordly fane,
And priestly towers o'er the sandy plain.

Oh! when shall man behold in after time
Structures like these so awfully sublime!
Whose porphyry columns fretted o'er with gold
Towering on high, through boundless space uphold
Vast azure canopies, where twinkling gleam
Bright glowing stars, that cheat the eye, and seem
To those who gaze from the vast depths below
As if the heaven itself were o'er them now!
Awfully grand amid their vast arcades,
The echoing footstep dies away and fades,
Like the hoarse murmurs of the winds that sweep
At midnight o'er the waters of the deep!
Till man, with palpitating heart confess,
At once his power—at once his nothingness!

Look down, proud mortal! on the glittering files
Of priests and troops, that through the spacious aisles,

Column on column pressing, wind along
To the loud music of the clarion's song!
Lost in those boundless spaces, who can trace
The different aspects of each tribe and race!
Or who distinguish twixt the meanest thing
Of all that living concourse—and their king!
How sunk their proud magnificence! How lost
The dazzling splendour of that mighty host!
Mere glittering insects! in the moon's bright beam
Their flashing spears, and jewelled turbans gleam
Like those bright insects' wings, that cluster o'er
In countless myriads, the slimy* shore,
When the Nile's waters cease to flood the plain,
And ebbing sink within their banks again!

But see! those massive walls that rise between
The outer courts, and inner precints,—seen
To priests alone—fly back with thundering din,

* "They see in Egypt after the retreat of the waters of the Nile, and the fecundation of the soil—the slime covered over with a multitude of beetles".—Mons. Jomard.

And show to all, the sacred shrines within !
Yet stay !—before the excited crowd shall hail
The awful rising of that mystic veil—
And the dread Goddess, wrapt in robes of Light,
Unveiled, shall stand revealed to human sight !
Her shrines must smoke with incense that the Sun
Of burning Araby hath shone upon,
Rites be performed, and mystic deeds be done,
Lest the pure light of that miraculous blaze
For ever blast the sight of those who gaze !

And now behold the king advance to throw
Spices and myrrh amid the ember's glow,
That round the Cross* their lurid flames entwine,
Fitfully gleaming from that ancient shrine !
The startled eye appall'd with terror, sees
Grinning around those horrid Deities—

* "It is singular, at the time the Cross was held sacred among the ancient Egyptians (Socrates Scholasticus explains it as a symbol of Life to come,)—not only the custom of marking the forehead with the sign of the Cross—but Baptism and the consecration of bread in the Eucharist were imitated in the mysterious ceremonies of Mithra."—Tertull: de proscriptione Hereticorum.

Creatures more foul—more hideous to the sight—
In Nature's wildest freaks ne'er sprang to light,
Than those fierce demon forms that dimly shone
In the red glare from every sculptur'd stone!
The Gods of Egypt!—Things more fit to dwell
With fallen Eblis—and to people Hell!
Not these alone—behold each bestial form
From lordly Apis to the crawling worm!
Creatures of heat and moisture—things that lie
Shrouded in mercy from the sickening eye,
Within the ocean's vast immensity!
And still more fearful, still more dread than all
The grinning monsters on the sculptur'd wall
Those two majestic forms! Those ancient men—
The Hebrew chiefs—behold them here again!
Again the heavenly power, that sleeps beneath
The awakening influence of that Prophet's* breath,
Chills every heart; and fear and terror chain
With icy touch, the current of each vein!

* Moses.

Not yet was Pharoah's stubborn spirit broke,
Though with blanch'd cheek, and quivering lip he spoke—
"Ye shall be free! free as the ashes cast
"On the wild rushing of the whirlwind's blast!
"Free as the flame that glows on yonder shrine—
"A rebel's death—a rebel's grave are thine—
"On! priests of Isis! 'mid the ember's glow
"These rebel dogs, these cursed Hebrews throw!
"That all may see, if *He* they blindly name
"Their God, can save them from yon alter's flame!
"These walls their tomb—that burning shrine their grave—
"When Pharoah wills, no God has power to save!"
Presumptious wretch! See'st not that holy man
Smiles at thy wrath—nor trembles at thy ban!
Ev'n now with scornful glance and outstretch'd hand,
He waves his rod above the smouldering brand,
And the fierce flames in rolling masses spring
Consuming all they touch—while each vile thing—
Each reptile God—each grinning monster—all
Quivering with life, burst from the sculptur'd wall!

The frog—the newt—each creeping reptile form
Born of the slime—in swelling clusters swarm!
These are thy Gods! oh wretched land in these
Vile loathsome things, behold thy Deities!

In vain they fly!—beyond the Temple's gates
The same foul scene their sickening sight awaits!
O'er Zoan's smiling plains—ah thrice accurst
Since from their Gods it comes—the storm has burst!
With reptile life her flowery meads abound,
Spring from each stone—the stream—the sky—the ground.
Each step they take, where once they press'd the sod
The shrinking foot now spurns a reptile God!
Oh horrid curse! the foul and loathsome brood
Pollutes the couch—and nauseates the food!
The senses pall!—the eye recoils with fright—
And shuddering Egypt sickens at the sight!

Withered in soul, as on the loathsome bed
The guilty monarch laid his humbled head,

Worn with a thousand fears, and racking throes,
Exhausted nature yielded to repose;
He dreams of some gay festival where late
The light-soul'd sons of laughing Comus sate,
Where Love and Music with sweet thrilling power
Steal o'er the sense, and snatch the passing hour—
Love's fairest forms are there, whose glances dart
A magic something to the gazer's heart—
And Music's gentle breathing lightly floats
From lovely lips in soft seducing notes.
Elate with pride the monarch's glances rove
Through these gay courts of revelry and love,
And speak in language, eloquently plain,
Of the hot tide that courses through each vein.
What change is this! the fragrant torches throw
A sickly glare on all the pomp below!
The fountain's spray that sparkled in their light
Like glittering diamonds, to the sickening sight
Seem drops of blood—the perfum'd breezes bring
The charnels' loathsome vapours on their wing!

Those lovely lips that with soft trembling gave
Such heaven-fraught bliss—pale—chilly as the grave!
From the soft downy cheek the rose is fled—
Each graceful form—cold—rigid as the dead!
Yet one there is among that ghastly crew
Absorbs his gaze and thrills his senses too,
One shrouded form, around whose fleshless brow,
He sees the flowery chaplet withering now!
Sees one by one the grave clothes fall away—
Sees—starts—and wakes to loathing and dismay!*

What thoughts are his! what visions undefined,
Strange awful dreams, steal o'er his troubled mind!
Are these his Gods! whence then the mightier hand
That hurls in scorn these scourges o'er the land?
Oh humbling thought! that mightier God than they
Alone can drive the loathsome pest away—

* At the feasts of the Egyptians, a skeleton or figure of a corpse was always placed amongst the guests. In the earliest times this skeleton was uncovered, but as the people became more luxurious and refined it was always covered with a veil.

A deadly curse—a foul disease on all!
What! when thy foil'd magicians vainly try
In magic lore these wonders to outvie!
—And the same breeze, that wafts in every breath
To Misraim's tribes foul pestilence and Death—
Fans with light wing the sunburnt cheeks of those
Whose aged chiefs have prov'd thy mightiest foes—
Still must that God—that dread avenging form—
Breathe his fierce anger in the raging storm!
And smite—in anger smite—thy fertile plain
With the hot sleet and fierce consuming rain,
That leave those hapless fields, so lately graced
With Nature's smiles, a black and desert waste!

Infatuate king! when o'er the darken'd sky
From north to south his insect legions fly
In gathering clouds, like vultures from afar,
That scent the plunder and the breath of war!
And ghastly famine with her direful crew
Strides o'er the land and adds her horrors too—

See'st thou not here a God, who laughs to scorn
Thy puny might, of all its tinsel shorn!
See'st thou not here a God, whose vengeful arm
Strikes Egypt low—but shields his own from harm!

Fair shines the sun on fiery wings upborne,
And joyful Israel hails the rosy dawn;
From Goshen's tents, where late the piercing wail,
And dismal groan were heard in every gale,
Woman's dear voice, and the soft prattling cry
The merry laugh of lisping infancy—
Light happy peals in blissful cadence float,
While harp and timbrel wake each joyful note—
Wake Judah, wake! Thy years of woe are past!
Thy people's fetters from their limbs are cast!
Wake Judah, wake! and with soft tuneful lays,
Sing of thy Maker's love—thy heavenly Father's praise!

* * * * * * *

* * * * * * *

* * * Not yet thine eyes behold
The Dragon banner to the beeeze unroll'd!
Not yet ye see the wheeling troops advance
Fur's cany spear—and Egypt's brazen lance!
And many a swarthy troop, whose sinewy frame
And fiery steed—Arabia's deserts claim!
Ah! now ye pale! drown'd by the clarion's cry,
On the blanched lip the faltering accents die!
Round thy freed limbs the bloody cords entwine,
And sevenfold chains, and sevenfold woes are thine!
"Clime of the Gods! upon thy favoured land
"Heaven sheds its bounties with no sparing hand—
"And swift as rose beneath the Genii's call,
"The lofty domes of Balbec's* marble hall,
"Springs the light verdure o'er thy blackened plain,
"And clothes thy sunlit fields with smiles again!
"Oh where! the traces now of sad despair—
"The fiery rain—the scorching whirlwind—where!

* Balbec was supposed to have been built in a moment of time, by the Genii acting obediently to the orders of Jan Ben Jan one of the kings who governed the world before the time of Adam.—Moore.

"Thy sacred Nile purer than crystal roves
"Through the green lawns and perfum'd orange groves—
"Pure as before the impious Hebrew stood
"With arm extended o'er the glassy flood,
"And turn'd its holy waves to reeking blood!
"Where now the God, whose vengeful anger hurl'd
"The rage of Heaven o'er the shrinking world!
"Where now the locust horde, whose airy flight
"Threw o'er the plains the dark'ning shades of night!
"Where now the wither'd blossom—and the oak
"Riven and blasted with the lightning's stroke!
"No! like the bird,* that on the glittering dome
"Of On's high temple, rears his perfumed tomb—
"Lo! Misraim smiles, her cares, her trials o'er,
"With Youth renew'd, more lovely than before!
"In vain! the Hebrew slaves invoke their God—
"In vain! their leaders wave the magic rod!
"What God can crush the state whose power has stood

* The Phœnix, for a different version to that so well known, and adopted here, See the translation from Herodotus in the Appendix.

"Firm and unshaken—ancient as the flood!
"O'erthrow the shrines, or blast the sacred groves
"That Isis honours—and Osiris loves!"

'Twas thus that Pharoah spoke, each thought that led
To sober reason and repentance—fled.
Pride in each glance, and scorn in every tone—
He stands the monarch of the world alone.
And well the gorgeous scene that met the eye
Of him who gazed from the royal canopy,
O'er the vast crowd that throng the river's side,
Might fill the heart of Misraim's king with pride!
'Twas the fresh dawn of one of those Spring days
The infant year its loveliest grace displays,
And strives within the tender leaves to screen
The laughing flowers, that gaily peep between,
Like a young blushing bride, who coyly throws
The envious veil o'er all the charms she knows
Have thrill'd with tender love the dear one's breast,
Yet half retired from sight—seem loveliest.

The pride, the pomp, the panoply of war,
The glittering squadron, and the jewell'd car,
And all the soft luxurious wealth that peace
Wafts to her shores in every passing breeze—
All—all are there!—in dazzling bright array
To greet Osiris* on his festal day!
A thousand white-robed priests their censers swing—
A thousand youths with choral voices sing—
While many a troop of blushing virgins bring
Their little golden caskets, fill'd with flowers
And luscious fruits, pluck'd from the sunny bowers
On the Nile's banks—the grape whose rich dark skin
Shows, like their own, the ripen'd fruit within—
The much prized date†—the soft and golden rind
Of the bright orange—and the tamarind—
And 'mid the choicest flowers of every hue,
From the pale lily, to the rich deep blue
The violet bears—small glittering serpents twine

* The sun worshipped under the name of Osiris.

† For an anecdote shewing the high estimation in which the date is held in the east—see Appendix.

Whose golden scales, and varying colours shine
In the sun's rays, and prove—alas too well
How venom lurks where pleasure loves to dwell !*
And now the priests advance, the shrine to pile
With that sweet incense breathing bark, the Nile
Bears on its swelling current, as among
The golden hills† he rolls his waves along.
While others pour upon the teeming soil
The sparkling wine, and the dark olive's oil ;
And thickly scatter o'er the sacred ground
From golden dishes frankincense around.

'Tis mid-day now, and high above the shrines
Lord of the heavens the great Osiris shines,
Till dome, and palace, and the towering side
Of those vast structures glow, as if a tide
Of fiery light were loosened from his brow
In grateful smiles on all the pomp below !

* "Serpents were sometimes put in the baskets, and by their wreathing and crawling about amused and astonished the beholders.
† Wilford's Egypt.

Then rose the sistrum's cry, and the sweet flute's
Soft melancholy notes, while thrilling lutes
Touch'd by fair woman's lovely fingers raise
In glowing music their unhallow'd praise.
But high above the rich and swelling sound
From lute and harp that fill the space around,
Rings with wild cry upon the startled air—
The frenzied shout—the high priest's impious prayer!
"Giver and Lord of light!—whose boundless sway,
"And power divine, the countless stars obey!
"Lord of a thousand names!* whose dazzling robe
"Within its blazing folds enwraps a globe—
"Bend down thy rays in one concentric smile,
"And light with heaven-born fire this sacred pile!"

Earth shakes! and darkness—thick as that which fell
In Stygian veils around the gates of Hell,
When the proud angel from the fields of Light
Sank headlong—blasted by his Maker's might!

* Μυριονομος a favourite Epithet applied to Osiris.

Earth shakes! and darkness sevenfold darkness, shades
The light of Heaven—Great God! Osiris fades—
Quench'd is each ray—and in the blackening sky
His Isis sickens—and the planets die!
While breathless silence winds its icy chain
Round every heart, and freezes every vein!
Oh! now the time if aught of truth there be
In the dread rites—the awful mystery—
Of mighty Isis—when all else shall fail—
All else be vain!—to raise that mystic veil,
And chase with the pure light, the priesthood say
Glows brightly there, the damning curse away!
In vain! in vain! their Gods no help bestow!
And all is darkness, misery, and woe!

* * * * * * *

'Twas night—a night in Egypt that blest sphere,
Where the bright stars a twofold lustre wear,*

*"In these latitudes the naked eye can discern stars of two degrees less magnitude than it can discern in the northern skies."—Howison on the climate of Egypt.

And the pure moon—(oh not that orb which pours
Her cold drear smiles on Briton's chilly shores,
But the Bubastis* of the south—whose ray
Like her own sacred Ibis—torn away
From these dear climes, pines for the myrtle groves
The pale blue lotus, and the skies she loves†)—
Reigns here supreme—the blazing queen of night
And bathes the plains below in one vast flood of light.

So softly fall the dews—those precious tears
That Isis sheds, pledge of the love she bears
For her lost Lord—that even the leaves that wind
Their graceful foliage round the tamarind
To screen from harm the tender fruit within
Unfolding drink the glistening dewdrops in— ‡
And maidens wandering by the young moon's beam

* Bubastis the Diana of the Egyptians.

† The Ibis, a bird sacred to Isis, is said to die of grief when taken away from Egypt.

‡ "For the tamarind a peculiar provision is made. As soon as the sun is set, its leaves close around the fruit to preserve it from the dew, and open as soon as that orb rises again."—Botanical Work.

Launch their frail lamps upon the rippling stream,*
And watch with anxious glance, and straining eye
Their precious freights sail on triumphantly,
Through many a bed of threatening lotus glide,
And float in safety down the sacred tide.
Oh happy then! Tho' raging oceans roll
Their waves between—tho' far as pole from pole—
Still shall the lov'd one—though his footsteps stray
In distant climes, from Misraim's groves away—
Once more return, and these long ages seem
In that dear presence but a fleeting dream!

And yet not always thus!—from the thick shade
Of the acacias, see that bashful maid
Hurriedly cast her blushing glances round,
And kneel in trembling silence on the ground;
O'er the frail lamp her lips with quivering move
In silent prayer for her long absent love,

* A custom probably derived from the Hindoos, from whom originally, through the Ethiopians, the Egyptians derived their civilization, customs, and religion.

In silent vows to that pure star,* whose eye
On lover's woes looks down propitiously—
Then cast upon the stream the votive wreath
Of pure white lilies, whose ambrosial breath
The young moon loves†—ere yet her faltering hand
To the rough wave commit the little band
Of hopes, joys, fears—now lost in dark despair,
Now with hope buoyant—that all centre there.
With parted lip and straining eye she sees
The feeble flame contending with the breeze,
One moment now—one moment—and 'tis past
All fear—ah no !—that envious gust—'tis cast
A tossing wreck to the rude wave and wind,
Rayless and cheerless as her own sad mind !
'Tis night ! and the pale stars peacefully throw
Their silvery light on Memphis' halls below—

* * * * * *

* * Ye powers of Heaven declare !

* Isis was the star of lovers.—See Plutarch de Isid.
† Lilies were among the flowers particularly sacred to Isis.

Whose the fierce flame? whose thunders rend the air?
God of the Hebrew! who with pitying eye
Behold'st thy children's silent agony,
Thine the dread glance!—the fiery flame whose breath
Scathes like a gleaming sword the land beneath!
Thine the dread voice, whose thundering accents shake
The halls of Memphis for those children's sake!
Loud crash the peals! Hell's gates are burst!—and o'er
The sleeping land His fiery le ions pour!
What phantom form leads on the demon horde—
His head a scull—a blazing scythe his sword?
His white bones glisten in the sickly glare,
Fleshless and ghastly—sinewless and bare*—
And the pale horse he strides, whose fœtid breath
Reeks of the charnel and the grave? 'Tis Death!
His bony arm he waves above the plain—
One flash—one thundering peal—and all is dark again!

* Byron has a line in Saul, to which this is almost exactly similar—
"Fleshless, and sinewless, and ghastly bare."

Then rose from Earth so wild so dread a cry
A nation's wail—a people's agony!
The sleeping infant but so lately press'd
With tender rapture to its mother's breast,
Lies in those arms a cold and stiffening form,
A prey to Death, and the vile gnawing worm!
And as the bridegroom nearer to his side
Tenderly draws his young and blushing bride,
And looks into those eyes, that seem to him
His Heaven—his all—he feels each rounded limb
Rigid and cold—and sees that soul-fraught eye
Fix'd on his own in mortal agony!—
His vacant look, his quivering muscles tell
The anguish there—more horrid still than Hell
With all its ceaseless woes, and racking thoughts,
Gives to the wretch who wanders through its courts!

Oh sad the scenes where Death with greedy hand.
Claims as his own the first fruits of the land!
Reft of his child—to regal splendour born—

Oh sad they cry from Pharaoh's bosom torn!
No magic lore, no priest can ward the blow,
That lays in dust the heir of Egypt low!
No earthly wisdom stay the awful hand,
That rocks with mortal throes the palsied land!
How crushed his heart! How fallen, how quell'd his pride!
His fears compel the boon his hate denied—
And the proud king, a lowly suppliant craves
A blessing—even from the lips of slaves!*
While many a costly robe, and jewelled ring
Wish eager hands their trembling masters bring!

In Israel's tents far different speeds the night,
God is their shepherd, and his love their might—
While hovering angels hide with golden wings
Heaven's wrathful flames, and mighty thunderings.
"And must we flee, the murmuring tribes complain?
"Tempt the dark night, the wild and desert plain?"
Lo! where the white stal'd priests bear on their load—

* Exodus, c. xvii, v. 32.

The holy ark—the temple of their God!
The heaven-born fire descends—a gladdening ray—
"A flame by night, a friendly cloud by day!"
Type of that heavenly love, whose mighty spell
Shall break the bonds of death, and burst the gates of Hell!

THE LAST DAY,

A POEM.

The Last Day.

—o—

The last loud trump with awful sound hath sped
To rouse the nations and awake the dead—
Once more round Sinai's mount the thunders peal,
And spheres convulsive to their centres reel!
Once more round Sinai's mount the lightnings glow
And shrouded myriads throng the plains below!—
Be quenched ye fires!—Ye rattling peals be dumb!
Creation's God to judge the world is come!
Creation's God—at whose divine command
From the dense Chaos sprang the teeming land—
At whose command the rolling oceans pour,
In ceaseless round their waves from shore to shore—
At whose command o'er Heaven's spangled bow
The bright stars glitter and the planets glow—
With mighty arm and awful voice shall doom
The earth once more to deep eternal gloom!

Bid the hoarse waves their great Creator know,
And with swift current to their sources flow—
Pluck from the glittering orbs their liquid flood
Of light—and quench them in a sea of blood!
And man—the last, the noblest work of all!
Must he too perish in the general fall?
No hand outstretch'd, with pitying grasp to save
The struggling victim from a watery grave?
No blazing beacon, 'mid the tempest's roar
To point the breakers on the rocky shore?
No magic charm! No mystic spell to foil
The silken folds of sin—the serpent's coil?—
No pitying hand to save! When Satan fell
In one short hour of sin from Heaven to Hell—
The fallen angel saw with envious eyes
A new and lovely Universe arise,
With ready wile he strove to win the sense
Of Eve to sin and disobedience,
Nor did he strive in vain—yet when the ban
Of Sin and Death was laid on rebel man,

With the same blow, swift to his rescue flew
The light of Reason and of Nature too!
No blazing beacon!—Where the sacred stone
Trac'd with the finger of the Mighty One!
No blazing beacon!—What! When Moses trod
The sacred mount, and stood before his God!
When beams of heavenly radiance were shed
In glowing splendour round the Prophet's head,
And hurl'd in thunders from the thick dense fog,
Rang thro' the prostrate camp the Decalogue!
No mystic spell! no magic charm!—Thou sun,
Drunk with the bloody scene thou gazest on!—
Thou sickening moon—ye flickering stars disclose!
Whose mangled form?—whose quivering limbs are those?
Earth shakes!—the dead spring from their dark abode—
And Nature mourns the death of Nature's God!
No mystic spell! Go turn thy sceptic eye
Where lowly Jesus bleeds on Calvary!
If then man perish shall the senseless clay,
The thing created—to its maker say

"Why mould, why form me thus—with the same breath,
Wake me to life and hurl me back to death?"
Is man more wise than God? The deep vast sea
The budding foliage of each shrub, each tree,
His might—His knowledge—wisdom—power—rehearse,
Each drop a world—each leaf an universe!
Is man more wise than God?—Let the free'd mind
To fancy waken'd leave the world behind,
And floating on the elements explore
The farthest verge of inert Nature's shore—
Still onward pressing in its upward race,
Thread the interminable paths of space;
On, on, from star to star, on, on, to where
Through the blue void new suns, new worlds appear,
Till lost in wandering 'mid the vast abyss,
It turns from worlds till now unseen, to this—
Creature of clay! base grovelling worm! confess
Thy world an atom—and thyself still less!

* * * * *

In countless masses o'er the glowing plain

Collected atoms spring to life again,
And the dry bones that slumbered in the tomb,
Now robed with flesh, their wonted forms resume.
From North, from South the gathering nations pour
Ere Earth shall fade—and time shall be no more—
From East, from West the gathering nations fly
Ere time shall pass into Eternity!
Some with the chaplet wreath'd around the brow
That cowers with fear, and thrills with terror now—
While the fond wretch—that bending to the nod
Of reigning mammon, owned no other God—
With fruitless efforts vainly seeks to hide
Earth's glittering baubles, once his joy, his pride—
With fruitless effort vainly strives to tear
The jewell'd robe, that clings in judgment there.
Oh gold! oh wealth! Where now thy power to save?
Repentance comes too late beyond the grave!
And there the hero—him whom curses bore
From Scythia's wilds to India's farthest shore,
Till sunk at last 'neath Death's remorseless doom,

His slaughter'd myriads form the hero's tomb;
Strip'd of his laurels now, his frenzied eye
Rolls with unutterable agony;
And the red drops that gather on his brow
In judgment rise to curse the *murderer* now!

Who comes on clouds of rolling ether borne,
His face more radiant than the smiling morn?
In eddying circles round his snow-white hair
The lambent flames his martyr's death declare—
And touch'd with fear, and reverential awe,
Now spare the form that once they wantoned o'er.
Bound to the fatal stake, his pitying smile
Fell on th' exulting wretch that fir'd the pile,
And the fierce bigots—in his boundless love
Forgave—and was forgiven from above!

On! on, they come—the earth—the sea—the sky—
Glow with the presence of the Deity!
Hush'd by his voice the raging storms are still,

The lightnings cease obedient to His will!
The fœtid earth, till now with night o'erspread
—The reeking charnel of the living dead
With loathsome forms and hideous monsters stor'd—
Now with bland smile prepares to meet her lord!

Once more! once more on Sinai's rocky height
Glows the bright splendour of the Godhead's light!
Not as of yore, when Mercy deign'd to shroud
Its dazzling glory from the prostrate crowd!
But bright, and glowing as the flame that led
The wandering tribes o'er Ethan's coral bed,
Bright as the flaming bush, it shines again,
That Moses saw on Horeb's flowery plain!
E'en Seraph forms, the aerial space that throng,
And fill the air around with heavenly song,
Themselves all radiant with its brightness, raise
Their golden plumes to shade them from its blaze—
While the bow'd nations, awe-struck, clasp the sod,
Nor dare to gaze upon the living God!
Oh! sweet the sounds of mercy and of love,

"Welcome blest spirit to thy home above!"
Oh! sweet the sounds from Seraph's lips that come,
"Welcome blest spirit to thy starry home!
"Still shall the light thro' countless ages shine,
"And some faint spark, some feeble ray be thine!"

See! from the mortal clay the dull scales fall
The soul impatient triumphs over all—
See! youth and beauty withered by the hand
Of age return more bright—the wings expand—
And the free'd spirit bursts its prison to win
The snowy raiment of the Seraphin!—

Lo!* the blest Lamb on cherub's wings upborne—
Loose flowing robes his godlike limbs adorn!
His head—his hair—than driven snow more white;
His eyes all beaming with celestial light!
His blazing feet like meteor stars embrace
The sea—the land—a glowing sun his face!

* Revelation, c. I., v. XIII.

He wakes the nations with his awful breath,
Lo! in his hands the keys of Hell and Death!
And hark his voice above the whirlwind's blast,
So deep, so clear! "I am the first,* the last,
And I am He, who liveth and was dead,
The chains of Hell around my limbs were spread—
What chains were cast, what fetters forged could bind
The God of Heaven—the father of mankind!
He spoke, and ceasing, rais'd his mighty hand,
Lo! scorching flames enwrap the black'ning land!
Once more 'tis rais'd—the streams, the rivers pour
Their blood-stain'd waters t'wards a sea of gore!
Once more 'tis rais'd—and, Lo, a reptile brood
Spreads o'er the land and populates the flood!
Hark fallen man! hark!—'tis thy funeral knell—
"*Earth was thy God—behold it now thy Hell!*"

Why shakes the mount? Why glows with fiercer gleam
The fiery belt that girds the great Supreme?

* Revelation, c. I., v. XVII, XVIII.

Thou sun so black—thou waning moon so red—
Why fades thy light—why has thy lustre fled?
Ye starry host the melting skies that crowd
Why wrap the Earth in darkness as a shroud?

Hark! 'tis His voice above the thunder's róar,
"Be dark thou Sun—for Time shall be no more"
Hark! 'tis His voice, that thunders o'er the plain,
"Mourn ruined Earth—eternal Chaos reign!"

MAN'S DUTY TO THE CHILD,

A POEM.

Man's Duty to the Child.

—o—

Where the streamlet rolls along,
With a low and murmuring song,
And the summer breezes play,
From the city far away—
Where the leafy groves around,
Echo with the joyful sound
Of a hundred voices there,
Thrilling thro' the sultry air.
Thither, thither, would I fly
From life's stern reality!
There, amid the flowery mead,
I, a merry life would lead;
Now with soft and tuneful lay,
Guile the passing hour away;
Now with pliant sinew break
The glassy surface of the lake,

Or engag'd in sportive race
Bright wing'd butterflies I'd chase;
If oppress'd with noon-day heat,
Then I'd seek some cool retreat—
And with lightsome footsteps rove
Wandering 'mid the shady grove,
Wandering o'er the enamell'd sod
Ne'er before by mortal trod.
And when night with sable wings
O'er the earth her mantle flings,
And the fleeting landscape fades
Scar'd by twilight's deep'ning shades—
Then I'd seek some mossy bed,
'Neath the sheltering Lime tree spread.
Round whose aged trunk entwine
Wreaths of fragrant eglantine,
From whose boughs, festooning high
Roses form a canopy.
Till with rays of orient light
Fair Aurora banish night,

Then with freshen'd steps again
Would I press the dewy plain.
Thus in realms of fancy roving,
  Slumber o'er my senses crept;
And a vision, strange and awful.
  Came upon me as I slept.
Fields of verdure lay before me,
  At my feet a river roll'd,
And its willing waters bore me,
  Towards a shore whose sands were gold.
Softly on the waters bore me,
  See, the glittering Eden flies!
And the verdant meads, before me,
  Melt dissolving from mine eyes.
Vain each wish—vain each endeavour—
  Ever onwards as I press,
Does the fleeting mirage ever
  Change again to barrenness.
Then the surging, boiling, billows
  Lash'd around my sinking form,

And a voice of thunder rous'd me
  Louder than the raging storm.
"Mortal! wherefore seek to gain
"Happiness, unmix'd with pain!
"Listen—mortal listen—they
"Who thus trifle time away,
"Sink unhonour'd to the grave!
"Light as foam upon the wave—
"Light as air their memory,—
"Would'st thou thus unhonour'd die!
"What!—if life seem dull to thee,
"Lapt in ease and luxury—
"Think, what thoughts of dark despair
"Rise before the child of care!
"Think how great the sorrows be,
That belong to penury!
"From life's pleasures turn thy gaze,
"Thread the city's busy maze.
"Mark how surely sin and sorrow
"On the steps of want do follow,

How the cup of woe o'erflows
"With its bitter draught, to those
"Whom a cold neglectful world
"To the depths of vice has hurl'd!
"Mark that form, so thin and wan,
"A child in years—in sin a man,
"See his young but guilty brow
"Seam'd with sin and sorrow now!
"Whose?—if steep'd in crime and ill,
"Ere the force of moral will,
"To his infant bosom gave
"Power, himself from vice to save—
"Whose the sin, and whose the shame?
"Trifler! thou'rt alone to blame!
"Dark the past—but darker far
"Visions of the future are.
"See him now in manhood's prime,
"Black with guilt and stain'd with crime!
"Chain'd within the felon's cell—
"Hark is that the murderer's knell?

"Whose?—if round his childish mind
"Rank and noisome weeds are twin'd,
"And the deadly henbane grow,
"Where virtue's flowers alone should blow,
"Whose the sin and whose the shame?
"Trifler! thour't alone to blame!
"Waste not time and earthly treasure
"In the vain pursuit of pleasure,
"Save but one lost soul like this,
"From the yawning dark abyss
"Of a life of sin—but one—
"The goal is reach'd, the task is done—
"Then, not till then, wilt thou drain
"The cup of joy, unmix'd with pain!"

FUGITIVE PIECES.

The Dewdrop.

—o—

Oh say not the talent God gives may be hidden!
  Though norrow its compass—and small be its worth,
Not a dewdrop that sparkles, ere rises, unbidden
  To freshen the perishing flowerets of Earth!

Inhal'd in the sunbeam, again and again,
  It speeds on its mission of mercy to run,
For the showers that water the dry thirsty plain,
  Are formed from the dewdrops inhaled by the sun.

Oh then, say not the talent God gives may be hidden!—
  But chang'd as the dewdrop to soft falling rain—
Our minds like the dry thirsty soil, unforbidden
  Shall drink of its waters, again and again!

Lines,

SUGGESTED ON BEHOLDING THE BEAUTIFUL REMAINS OF A YOUNG LADY.

—o—

Upon a couch o'erstrewn with flowerets gay—
Deck'd like a bride prepared to meet the glance
Of some fond eye—a lifeless form there lay,
So pure, unearthly, in that long last trance
That they who watch in silence by her bed,
And tears of mingled hope and sorrow shed,
Might almost deem some habitant of air
Had left ætherial realms to slumber there.
Her hands are folded o'er her snow-white breast,
Her dark air drawn back from her marble brow,
Those eyes that once so brightly shone—at rest—
Her features motionless—yet even now

Though Death upon her his rough hand hath placed,
(For youth and beauty plead to him in vain)—
And all the charms of health and life effaced,
Still does her loveliest charm—her smile—remain!
While half-unclosed her lips,—as though the prayer
For those she leaves behind still lingers there.

Can this be Death? Where then the spoiler's pow'r
The awe—the agony—of that dread hour,
When the free spirit bursts its galling chain—
Impatient—light eternal to regain!
Can this be Death? Of terror and of gloom
Deprived—where then the horrors of the tomb!
When the last spark of life's celestial flame
Has fled! Ah! call it by some gentler name!
It is not Death—'tis but a calm repose—
Exhausted nature's rest—dark sorrow's close!
And as I gazed upon that maiden's bier
I felt the conqueror was conquer'd here?

Sympathy.

—o—

When the heart is with bitterest anguish o'erwhelm'd,
And time but increases its grief—
Tell me where shall it find from its terrors a rest!
Oh where can it turn for relief?

When our memory whispers of happiness fled,
Deeper gloom o'er the spirit to cast,
As the dark shades of midnight that mournfully speak
Of the sunnier days that are past—

When the flowers of Hope, that once transiently bloom'd,
Are wither'd by misery's blight—
Like the gold-tinted hues with which autumn is deck'd
Fade away in the winter's cold night—

And when youth's brightest visions are vanished and gone,
And the heart is o'erpress'd with its grief—
To the love-breathing bosom of Sympathy flee,
It is *there* it may turn for relief!

The Death of Cassibelaunus.

—o—

HARK 'tis the battle cry
Borne on the gale!
Banners proudly wave on high,
Glory! all hail!

On, onwards they rush, "Death or Liberty" crying,
The shrieks of the wounded, the groans of the dying,
Burst in agony's cries through the air:
On, onwards they rush, and the heaps of the slain,
That countless lie stretch'd on the gore-cover'd plain
Tell how nobly the Britons fought there!

Mourn, house of Cassii, mourn!
Thy warrior chief is dead—
Our liberty with him is gone,
In vain our heroes bled!

Rome conquering comes, and we
O'erpower'd with grief and shame—
Her victory-bought slaves must be,
Farewell to Freedom's name!

Yet mourn not Britannia o'er liberty's tomb,
Lament not thy Cassibel's sorrowful doom—
For thy glory shall never decay!
The spirit that breathed in our chiefs shall revive,
Thy children triumphantly ever shall strive
To be free from the conqueror's sway!

The Exile.

—o—

Oh why is the landscape all fading away,
  My own native land, I shall see thee no more!
I shall see thee no more—'tis the last fading ray
  That illumines my bosom, thou spell-breathing shore!

Oh why does the landscape so quickly depart!
  Sad emblem how swift pleasure turns into pain.
I am gone—dearest land—best belov'd of my heart—
  I am gone! and I never shall see thee again!

Ah! why do the waters unheeding roll by,
And leave me all lonely—they hear not my sigh!
Roll on mighty ocean! swift billow, thou bearest
  The exile away from the land of his birth,
Yet his spirit returning flies back to the fairest,
  The only-loved spot on this beautiful Earth!

Fragment

OF A SCHOOL POEM ON GREECE, WRITTEN AT HUNTINGDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL.*

—o—

THE plains of Marathon, as shepherds say,
Whose timid steps at midnight lead them there,
Still loudly echo with the battle fray,
The clash of war still breaks the chill night air ;
As though the spirits of the dead—
(Like blessed angels hovering
At midnight o'er the earthly bed,
Of some belov'd, some cherish'd thing,
Who bring sweet dreams of heavenly bliss,
Of other worlds more pure than this.

* The peasants have now a superstition that at midnight the sounds of battle may be heard over the plains where the battle of Marathon was fought—. Keightley's Greece.

Yet oft themselves so pure, so holy,
When they behold man's baser clay,
Mix their deep love with melancholy
And chiding wing their flight away—)
Now frown upon the apathy
Of him who bends the willing knee,
Who shuns the patriot's honour'd grave!
A name of immortality—
To live "a bondsman's slave!"

FAVILA AND ISABEL,

A BALLAD.

Fanita and Isabel.

—o—

Why weeps my own fair Isabel?
  Cried the Lord of sunny Spain,
Oh swiftly fly the moments by,
  Ere I seek thy bower again!

Oh ride not out my leige to day!
  Oh ride not out she cried!
But check thy rein; and turn again,
  To the bower of thy bride!

Oh ride not out my love to day!—
  My heart beats faint and sore,
For whispering voices seem to say,
  We part to meet no more!

Last night! oh God! that awful dream!
  I felt the chilly breath—

My hand all powerless lay within
  The icy hand of Death—

He press'd his wither'd lips to mine
  He call'd me his fair bride—
Oh God! she cried—those lips were *thine*—
  'Twas *thou* lay by my side!

Loud laughed the Lord of sunny Spain,
  From tower and battlement,
The echoing laughter rang again
  In mocking merriment.

Loud laugh'd the Lord of sunny Spain,
  But see he pales with fear—
As once again the mocking strain,
  Smote hollow on his ear!

He bends him from his coal black steed,
  Their lips with kisses burn—
"Be dry those tears, be hush'd fond fears,
  "Thy Love will soon return."

Why weeps the fair Queen Isabel?
  Why faints her heart so sore?
Her Lord is gone through brake and dell,
  To chase the grisly boar.

No hunter old—no Baron bold—
  Can match that monarch's skill,
For hunting fame, resounds his name,
  Through forest, vale, and hill!

Yet high above their heads the sun
  Shot down his scorching ray,
"He comes not yet," she cries, "not yet
  "His footsteps homeward stray!"

Her falcon to her bosom flew—
  His latest gift—to hide
His little head, then trembling spread
  Its fluttering wings, and died.

Night veils the mountain tops—the sun
  Sinks into the western sea,

The pure stars throw on all below,
  Their pale light peacefully.

But to that lone heart no sound
  Tells of her Love's return,
No echoing horn—no baying hound—
  Bids her no longer mourn.

But from the turrets grey the owl
  Hoots forth her dismal cry,
And wild and wailing breezes howl
  Across the summer sky.

Why weeps the fair Queen Isabel?
  Why faints her heart so sore?
Her Lord is gone through brake and dell,
  To hunt the grisly boar.

All lonely with no lamp but love
  To guide her steps aright,
Through moor and glade, and forest shade,
  She wanders all the night!

Till tir'd and faint she sinks in sleep
  Upon the dewy ground,
Once more she dreams those icy arms
  Encircle her around!

Once more upon her fever'd cheek
  She feels that charnel breath!
Again she feels those icy lips,
  Cold—motionless—as death!

And starting from her troubled rest,
  Sees by the moon's pale beam,
Her head reclining on his breast—
  From whence a trickling stream

Of deep red blood the greensward dyed—
  Quick comes and goes her breath—
One sigh—the lover and his bride
  Together sleep in death!

APPENDIX

TO THE

PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

APPENDIX TO THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

PAGE 11.—"*Like spirit heroes such as poets dream*
Peopled the world ere Men's rebellious spear
All conquering drove them from their dwelling here."

According to Herodotus and Diodorus, both of whom visited Egypt and talked with the priests,—Gods reigned in Egypt before men.—It is not worth the labour to examine the introductory chapters of the 1st Book of Diodorus any further than to convince ourselves that the Egyptian Deities, according to his accounts of them, were nothing more than the powers of Nature, invested with forms and individual attributes. These Gods reigned for 18,000 years, the last of this divine race being Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris. Then began the race of human kings, which comprised a period of near 5,000 years from Men or Menes, the first mortal king, to the 180th Olympiad, or about 58 before Christ, when Diodorus visited Egypt. It is curious that in the Hindoo mythology Man or Manus is the progenitor of the human race, as

in Egypt Men or Menes was the first human king. The resemblance between these names and the Greek Minos, and German Mannus—the founder of the Teutonic race is sufficiently striking.—Our own word *man* belongs to this ancient family, and it signifies in the Sanscrit, *to think.—Egyptian Antiquities.*

PAGE 19, v. 9.—"*Sweet as the sounds from Memnon's harp that rise.*"

Alexander Humboldt, in his Personal Narrative speaks "of sounds issuing from the banks of the Oronoko at sunrise, which he attributes to the confined air escaping from crevices, where the difference of the internal and external temperature is very considerable. The French *Savans* also say that they heard such sounds at Carnak on the east side of the Nile.—Hence, perhaps, the priests who had observed this phenomenon took advantage of their knowledge, and by what means we know not, contrived to make the people believe that a similar sound proceeded from the colossal statues."

PAGE 19.—"*The rest all lost—lost to Eternity!*"

The Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul

—which was connected with the *preservation* of the body. When the body decayed, the soul lost its place in the regions of happiness,and during 3,000 years went through all forms of living creatures—until it came again into the human figure.—*Egyptian Antiquities.*

Hence the process and custom of embalming—from the dread of suffering this long transfiguration—and we may well imagine the horror an Egyptian would feel in being exposed to a death similar to that mentioned in the preceding lines.

PAGE 43.—"*No like the bird, &c.*

"There is also," says Herodotus in the account of Egypt, "another sacred bird, the name of which is the Phœnix. I have not myself seen it, except in a picture, for it seldom visits them—only, (as the people of Heliopolis say,) every five hundred years; and they say that he only comes when his sire dies: and he is, if he is like his picture, of size and shape as follows:—part of his plumage is gold coloured, and part crimson; and is for the most part very like to the eagle in outline and bulk. And this bird, they say, devises as follows; but they say what to me seems beyond belief:—that setting out from Arabia he brings his sire to the temple of the Sun; that

he covers him with myrrh, and buries him in the temple of the Sun—and that he conveys him thus—first he forms an egg of myrrh as large as he is able to bear, and afterwards tries whether he can carry it—and when he has tried, he hollows out the egg, and puts his sire into it, and covers with other myrrh that part of the egg where he had made the hole, and puts in his sire; and when his sire lies inside, the weight (of the egg) is the same (as it was before it was hollowed out): and having covered him up, he conveys him into Egypt, into the temple of the sun."—*Herodotus, Book* II., *chap.* 73.

PAGE 45.—"*The much prized date.*"

The following anecdote, which the Author has read in a Botanical Work, the name of which he has forgotten, will serve to shew the estimation in which the date is held in the East. "An Egyptian woman who came to England, having charge of some children, returned to Egypt after a stay of about four years. On her return to her people, she was surrounded by many, and assailed with questions. She answered, "The country is like a garden—the people are rich, and have fine clothes—fine houses—fine horses—fine carriages, and are said to

be very wise and happy." On hearing all this her auditors became envious of England—and discontented with their own condition. They were departing with these feelings still in the possession of their minds, when the woman happened to say "one thing is certainly wanting; *there is not a single date tree in the whole country.*" Having satisfied themselves by frequent enquiries, that she was quite sure of this—their feelings were changed, and they went away wondering how man could live in a country where there were no date trees."

PAGE 91.—Favila King of Spain reigned 737 A.D.

On the spot where Favila was killed, a monastery, called *San Pedro de Villaneuva*, was built by Alphonse I. On the door of the church belonging to this monastery is a rude representation of the last scenes of Favila's life. In one part there is a horseman in mail, with a helmet on his head, and a hunting spear in his hand, and a lady endeavouring to detain him. In another part finding he was not to be detained, she is kissing him, as if to bid him adieu. In a third, there is a horseman with his sword run through the body of a boar; and at the same time the animal is grasping the shield with its fore feet, and with open mouth aiming at him.—*Sandoval, Notes to the Historias de los Cinco Obispis, page* 95.

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